

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20502

September 12, 2011

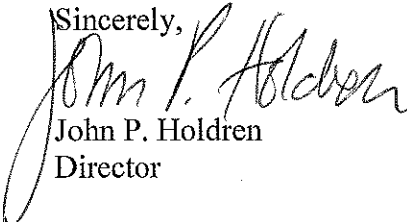
The Honorable Charles F. Bolden, Jr.
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, D.C. 20546

Dear Administrator Bolden:

This letter is in response to your March 25, 2011 letter to me requesting nuclear safety launch approval for the Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) spacecraft, which will be powered by a type of radioisotope thermoelectric generator.

Based on the information and analysis contained in the Department of Energy's final Safety Analysis Report and the Safety Evaluation Report completed by the Interagency Nuclear Safety Review Panel, as well as the contingency plans that you have in place, I concur with your recommendation and hereby approve your request for nuclear safety launch approval for MSL, consistent with Presidential Directive/National Security Council 25, as amended May 8, 1996. If the launch is delayed beyond December 18, 2011, please provide an explanation of the reasons for the delay so that I would be able to evaluate whether there could be any implications for the nuclear launch safety determination.

Sincerely,



John P. Holdren
Director